

# SOCIAL ACTION



JULY 15, 1938

## URBAN SCENE

Margueritte Harmon Bro

# **SOCIAL ACTION**

Published by the Council for Social Action of the  
Congregational and Christian Churches

289 Fourth Avenue

New York City

July 15, 1938

*Editorial Committee:* HUBERT HERRING  
ALFRED SCHMALZ, MARGUERITTE BRO

---

## **CONTENTS**

URBAN SCENE . . . . .	3
FOREWORD . . . . .	3
GANGS . . . . .	19
WORSHIP . . . . .	26
HOUSING . . . . .	30
LEISURE . . . . .	36
EDUCATION . . . . .	40
HEALTH . . . . .	42
UNEMPLOYMENT . . . . .	46
THE UNITED CHURCH . . . . .	60
THE CITY AND ITS WAYS: A BOOK REVIEW . . . . .	63

---

SOCIAL ACTION, Volume IV, Number 8, July 15, 1938. Published once a month, throughout the year. Subscription \$1.00 per year; Canada, \$1.20 per year. One to 9 copies, 10c each; 10 to 49 copies, 7c each; 50 or more copies, 5c each. Entered as second class matter June 16, 1938, at the Post Office at New York, New York, under the Act of March 3, 1879.



# URBAN SCENE

By Margueritte Harmon Bro

## FOREWORD

WHETHER we live in the open country, the town or the city, we continually reckon with the problems of the city—the costs of relief, organized labor, public health, adequate housing, and the like. We express our relation to such problems through action or reaction or inaction.

Each individual determines for himself how much responsibility for the problems and achievements of the city he will carry. If he is a Christian, he seeks actively to promote the abundant life for all. He tries to make his prayers, his vote, his dollars, and his share of public opinion speak the same language. He is likely to find that his effectiveness is increased by working in and through the church. Hence—even though he may live in the country—the city church is exceedingly important to him.

Some of us want to *feel* what we *know*, to be increasingly sensitive to the human heart of mass problems. Some of us also need to know more of the facts beneath the situations to which we react emotionally. But we are not specialists in the study of society. We are just ordinary people looking for a little more wisdom.

The following pages are prepared for such people. Some of the most eager-minded are old people, some of the most level-headed are young. Pictures and facts speak to both groups. These pages may be read quickly or studied gravely, according to the reader's need. They were prepared hopefully, perhaps wistfully, and certainly with faith in the ability of the church to fulfill its task in increasing measure.

M. H. B.

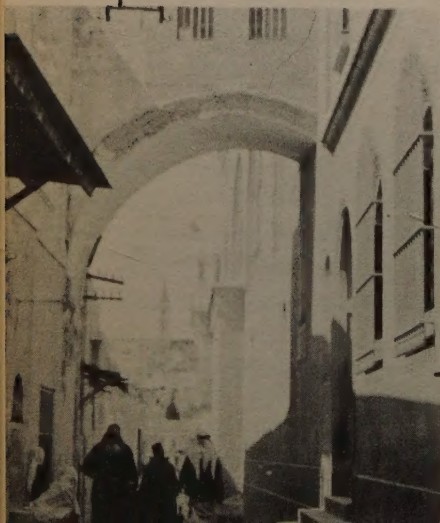


C. C. Steinbeck

In the heyday of its glory Jerusalem, loved of the prophets, kings, and people, was really a crowded, dirty, unsanitary hodgepodge of a city. But to the Jews it was not only beautiful but holy because it was their city—the city of their homes and their hope, of their failures and their faith, of their aspirations and their fierce will to make it more glorious.

So, too, with our cities of America. Far from ideal, they nevertheless command our loyalty for they are our cities, born of our blood, our sweat, our dreams. Not yet achieved, but achieving.

To keep before our eyes the vision of the Holy City is to make more wise and skillful the service of our minds and hands.



“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. . . . And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. . . . And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”





*Presbyterian Board of National Missions*

**Cities began** as centers of trade, of learning, of government administration. In olden days, their population was relatively small in proportion to the total population because most of the people had to wrest a living from the soil. When Rome was at its height under the Caesars, a relatively small proportion of the population of the Roman Empire lived in cities.

Naturally, in any country, as people from various localities moved into the cities they brought a variety of customs in dress, food, speech, community life. They brought also their religion. Early in the Christian era the church made a place for itself in the life of the city.



THE CHURCH OF SAINT MARY, DANZIG

*Orient & Occident*



All during the Middle Ages the church was the one institution which cared for the unfortunate—for the sick, the lame, the blind, the poor. In Europe from the twelfth century to the sixteenth century, the church sponsored some nine thousand leper asylums under the care of friars and nuns.

SAINT CROSS, WINCHESTER



## CATHEDRAL AT AMALFI

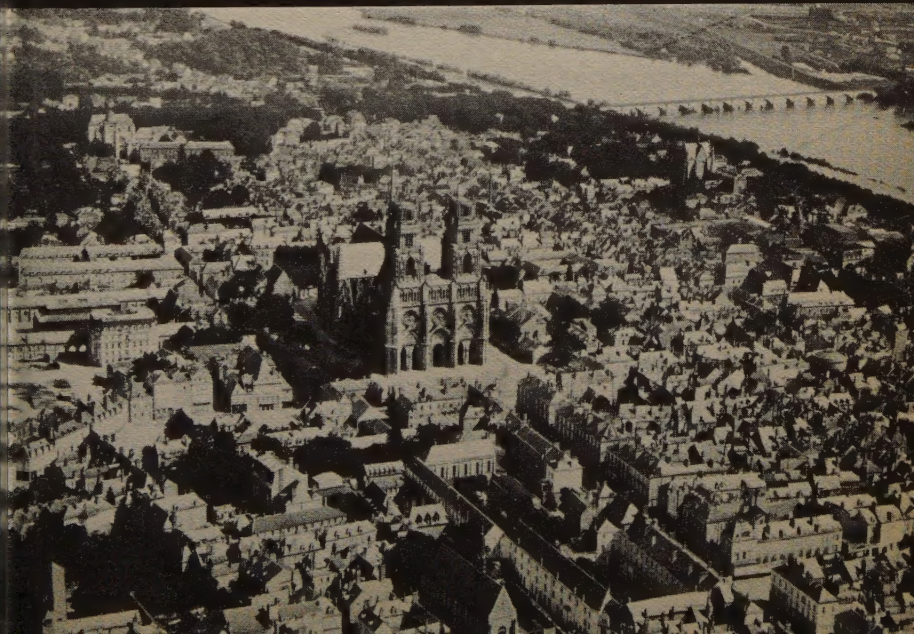
*Orient & Occident*

Great churches and cathedrals are more than places of worship. Hampered by lack of unstanding — just as they are hampered today — their spires and towers nevertheless became symbols of Christian communities dedicated to the service of the cities of which they were part.

*Orient & Occident*



## CATHEDRAL AT ORLEANS, FRANCE



# GROWTH OF URBAN POPULATION

*Maps from "Our Cities," W*

1880



The rapid growth of cities in the United States was due primarily to the centripetal influence of steam and electricity, and to improved sanitation. Manufacturing concentrated in centers where shipping facilities were good, and people drew close to the factories. But so many thousands of persons could not live in the immediate neighborhood of their working places. Under old methods of transportation, it would have been impossible to live five, ten, twenty-five miles from work. The working day would have been consumed in travel. But fortunately the



# THE UNITED STATES IN FIFTY YEARS

Government Printing Office, 1937

## 1930



steam and electricity which drove the factory engines also made possible rapid transportation by means of trains, trolleys, and automobiles. The city could stretch itself and breathe.

The sanitation problem among a million persons, or even a smaller number, would have been insurmountable before the days of power-driven turbines which send fresh water to every door and make sewage disposal possible. The germ theory of disease, compulsory sanitation, public support for departments of health—these are bedrock upon which the modern city is built.



The larger the city the more races which come together, each with its own reason for coming. For instance, during and immediately following the World War, a million and a half Negroes migrated north to work in the rush-order factories. They centered chiefly in Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, New York and Philadelphia, where they now form a Negro city within the city.

In New York City, according to the latest census figures, there are more Jews than in Jerusalem; half as many Italians as





n Naples; more Poles than in  
Cracow; as well as 8,414 Chinese;  
3,356 Japanese; 15,115 Turks;  
42,431 Russians; 237,588  
Germans.

To see the city through all of  
these eyes would be to under-  
stand some of the difficulties of  
those who serve the city as  
teachers, doctors, ministers, bank-  
ers, merchants, municipal offi-  
cers, librarians, managers of the-  
atres and moving picture houses  
—all of those who work, for pri-  
vate gain or public service, as  
servants of the people.

*W.P.A. Federal Art Project*





*W.P.A. Federal Art Project*

A city is not merely an oversized town but many towns, some of them specialized, all pushed closely together. The steel mill community is very different from the suburban community—the houses, the yards, the stores, even the schools and churches, are different in type and quality. But the people of







*W.P.A. Federal Art Project*

both areas vote for the city officials, pay taxes for the city's support, and form pressure groups of public opinion. Hence, even when they seem to have nothing in common, they are making, and partaking of, that composite which is the character of their city.



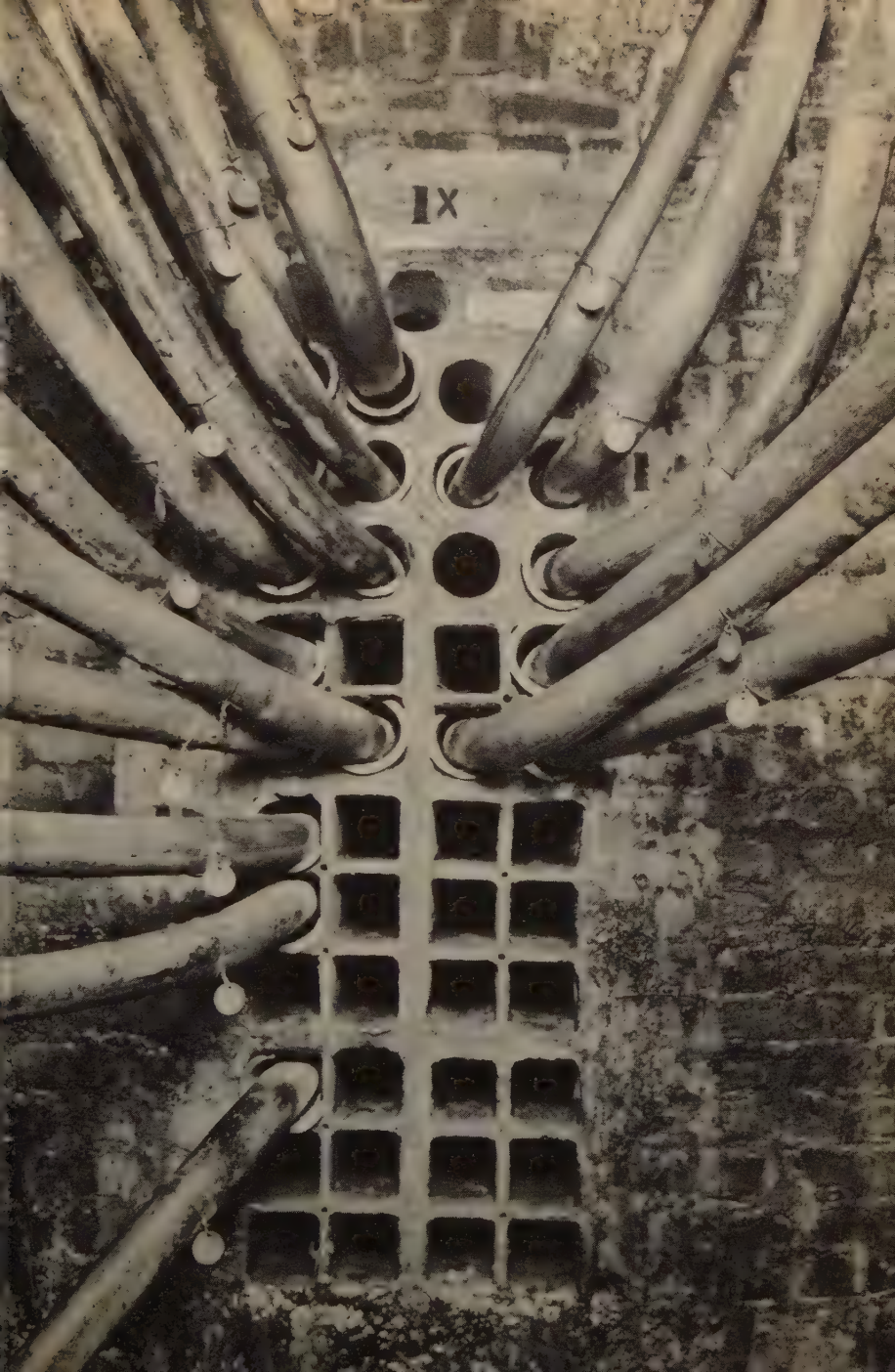


*W.P.A. Federal Art Project*

Not the least significant part of the city is the unseen city—the system of communications below street level, the network of gas and water mains, the power lines. Unnoticed for the most part are the thousands of miles of telephone wires which make the modern city more articulate than any of its ancestors since time began.

Pulsing through the visible city is another kind of unseen city—the city of spiritual forces for good and evil. No pictures can portray these intangible forces and yet they create the personality of the city.





IX

**I**f the city stood still, it could be studied, measured, charted, and perhaps eventually managed for its own good. But a city grows and moves and changes its mind.

Nevertheless most cities, like most persons, follow a general pattern in growing up. Every city has a business center made up of stores, factories, warehouses, railway terminals, theatres, banks, and other enterprises, which we designate collectively as "downtown."

Around this center is a circle or band of cheaper business places and poor homes. This district is frequently called the "area of disorganization." The land has high value because eventually the business district will expand and new buildings will be needed. But, in the meantime, the old buildings are in poor repair because landlords do not want to spend money on old tenements and stores. Hence, people who can pay only very low rent live in this section. They are crowded together and usually have insufficient light, air, water supply, sewage, play space. In this area in every large city are districts called by such names as "The Street of Homeless Men," "Hell's Corner," "Ragpickers' Row."

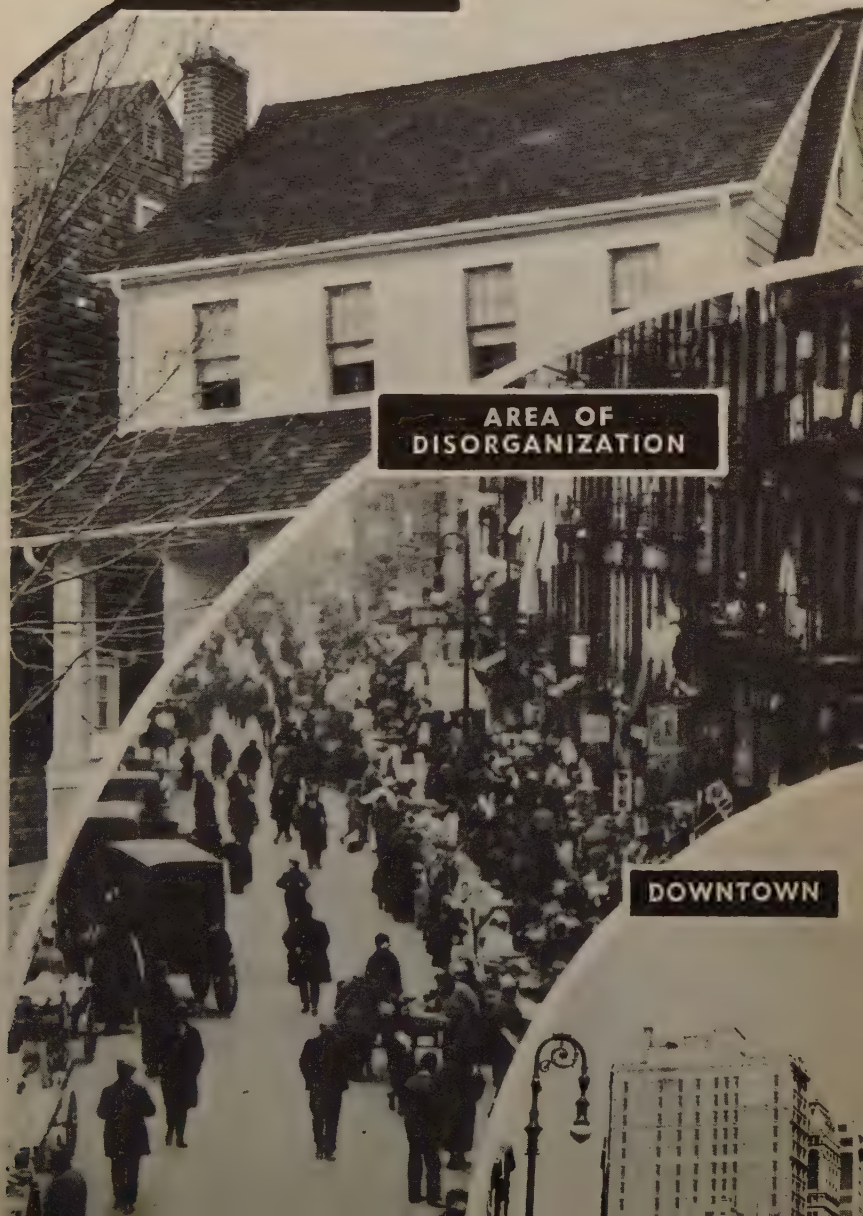
Outside the area of disorganization the houses begin to be better, roomier, cleaner. The farther one goes from the center of the city, the finer the residence districts tend to become. More trees, larger yards and gardens, wider play spaces, as well as convenient and beautiful homes, tend to draw the more privileged groups away from the heart of the city.



**BETTER . . . ROOMIER  
.. CLEANER ..**

**AREA OF  
DISORGANIZATION**

**DOWNTOWN**





Gangs and grass seldom grow in the same place. . . . Children who have plenty of *space* to play in, have less *time* to get into trouble. . . . With a fire escape for a front porch, a crowded, narrow street for a front yard, an alley full of tin cans and garbage for a back yard—would you rather play at home or roam around with the other “kids” in search of excitement? . . .

*Acme*







*W.P.A. Federal Art Project*





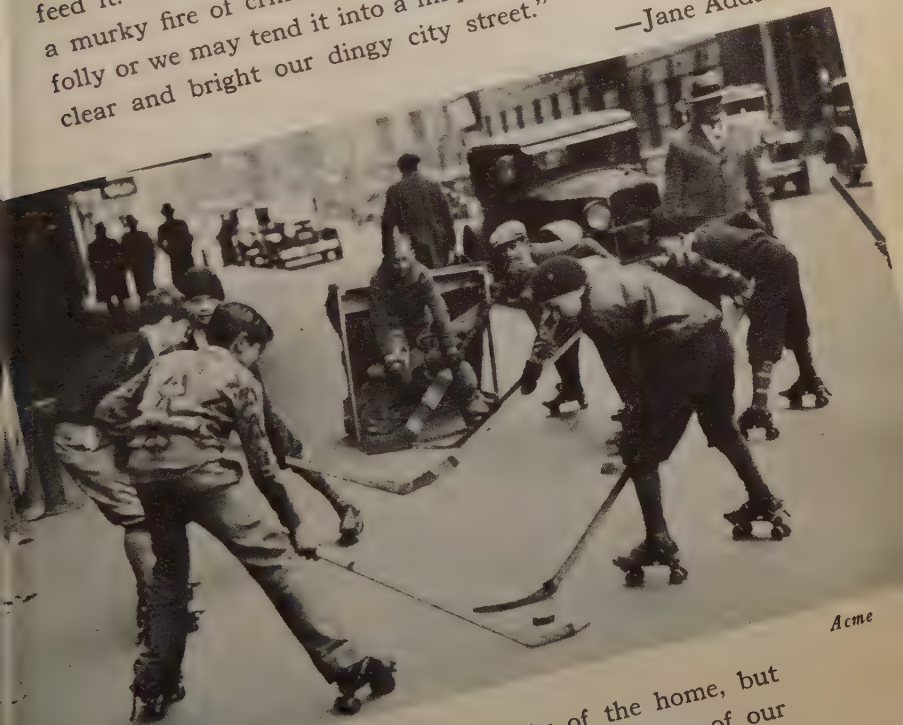
*Y.M.C.A., Cleveland*





"We may either smother the divine fire of youth or we may feed it. We may either stand stupidly staring as it sinks into a murky fire of crime and flares into the intermittent blaze of folly or we may tend it into a limpid flame with power to make clear and bright our dingy city street."

—Jane Addams



Acme

"By all means let us preserve the safety of the home, but let us also make safe the street in which the majority of our young people find their recreation and form their permanent relationships."

—Jane Addams



Old Trinity Church, on Wall Street, was once the center of a comfortable neighborhood. Now it is the center of New York's financial district. What should a church do when its members move away?

A few churches, like Trinity, depend upon the traditions and loyalty of old families, plus their own investments, to maintain them where they are.

Many more churches move with their members farther toward the suburbs in order to serve their congregations better. Still other churches adapt their services to the needs of the community, changing as necessary from the service of a privileged group to the service of the underprivileged.

**ADAPTING . . .**  
The Methodist Temple Building, Chicago — church and office building combined



**WITHSTANDING . . . .**  
Old Trinity, in the heart of  
New York's financial district.

*Adist Prints*



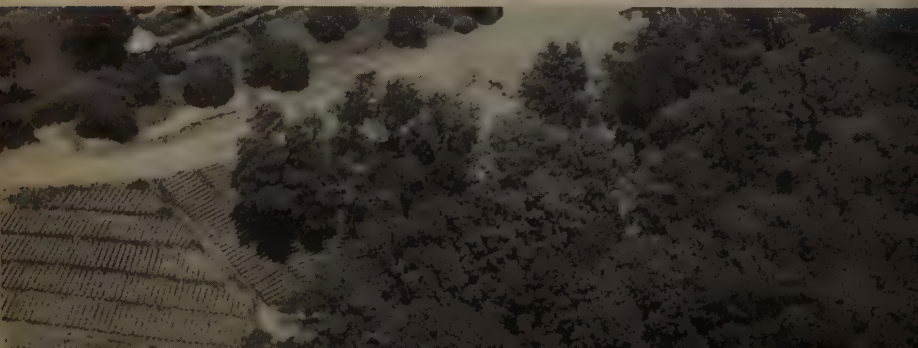
*Underwood & Underwood*





*Acme*

**WHY DO MODERN CITIES HAVE CHURCHES?  
WHAT IS THE BUSINESS OF THE CITY CHURCH OF TODAY?**





Fundamentally, the church's reason for being remains unchanged through the ages. In the country, the village, the city, the church seeks to develop the joyous, healthful, abundant life, not only of its members but of all the children of men. It feels acutely the brotherhood of man and insistently attests the fatherhood of God.

The kingdom of Heaven on earth is a radiant ideal not easily attained in a world of false values, confused social processes, bewildered individuals. The church, dedicated to a constant task, helps to bring perspective to the job of matching immediate social necessities against the long-time good.

In the city where people are crowded so closely together, where the steadying hand of nature is not easy to reach, where noise tends to obliterate serenity and haste to defeat progress, the church has the triple duty of being a wise and detached observer of society, an unrelenting leader of the forces against evil, and the continually renewed inspiration of the human heart.

**"I COME THAT YE MIGHT HAVE LIFE  
AND HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY."**

**Worship** is man's overflowing gratitude, his wonder, his acquiescence in a world which is precarious as well as good. By some deep instinct, human beings know that to worship is to stretch the soul to full stature and perchance thereby grow toward that fullness.

Worship does not require a particular place for its performing, nor a particular time for its upwelling. It may rise spontaneously to glorify an hour or a locality otherwise forgotten. But often when men most need to worship, frustration and defeat shut their eyes and ears. It is then that a place and a time for recapturing the awareness of God may be an answer to their necessity.

Hence the church—the city church.

*Where cross the crowded ways of life  
Where sound the cries of race and clan,  
Above the noise of selfish strife,  
We hear thy voice, O Son of Man.*



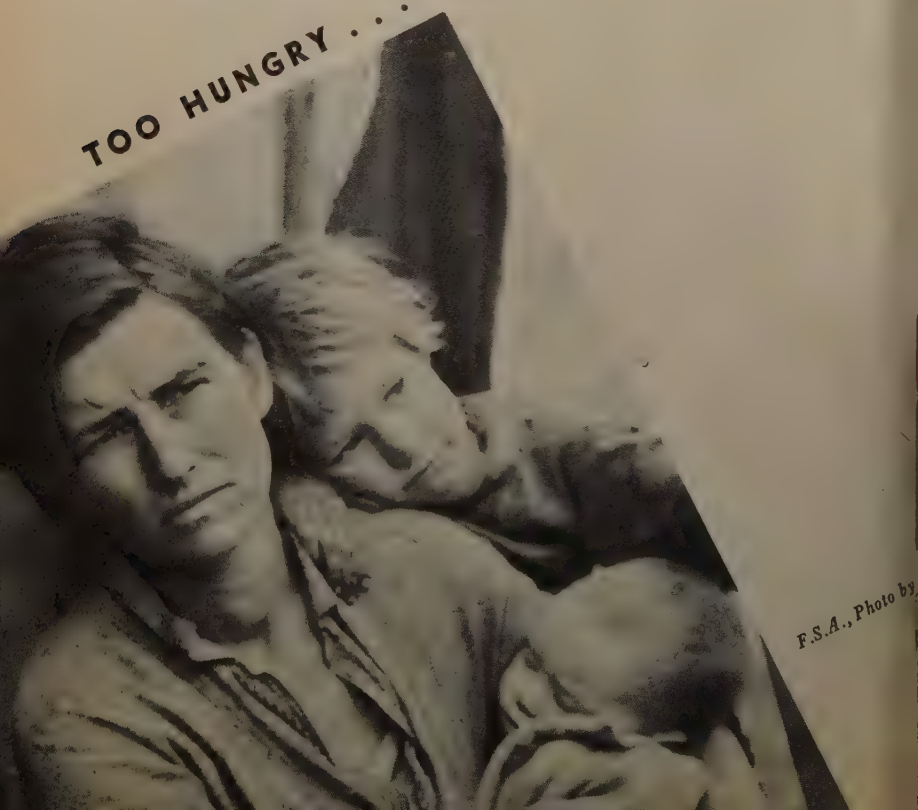
"O come, let us worship and fall down:  
And kneel before the Lord our Maker."



The "church invisible" is a worshipping community and the church building—cathedral or chapel—is a house of worship. But thousands of city people are shut out from both the community of worshippers and the houses of worship. They are allowed in, but they cannot enter because they are too hungry, too ignorant, or too anxious. They live in situations which the church does not touch. For them it does not exist.

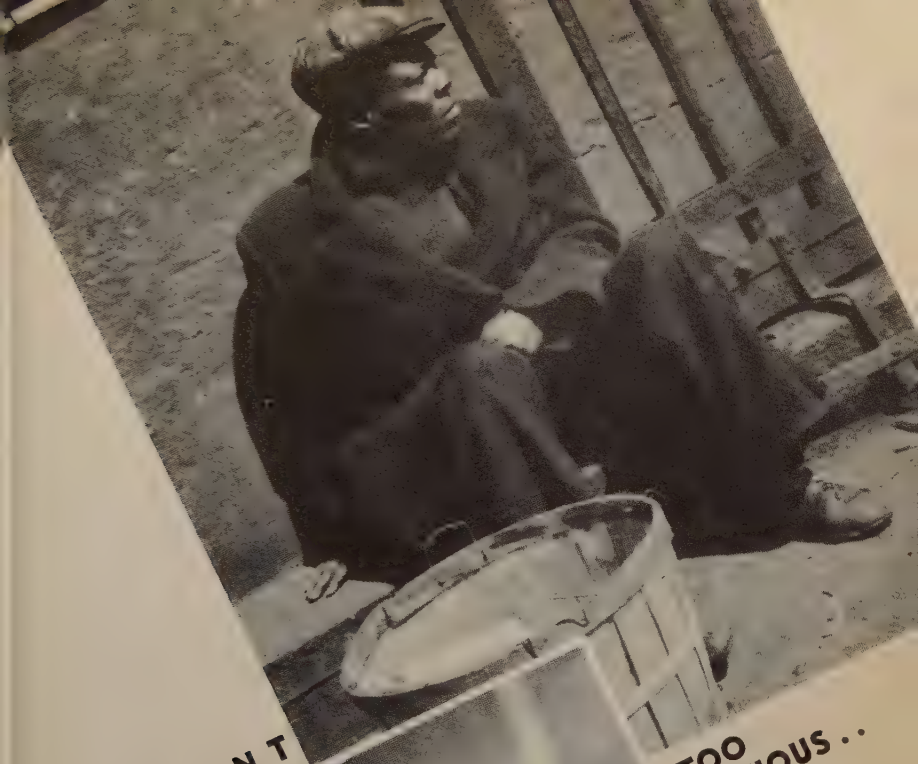
Wesley used to say, "You can't save a man when his feet are cold." Neither is a man likely to be saved when the gnawing of hunger obliterates all other interests. Jesus fed and healed the people *and then* he taught them. It is a hard fact that income has a practical relationship to worship.

TOO HUNGRY . . . .



F.S.A., Photo by





**IGNORANT**

**TOO  
ANXIOUS . .**

W.P.A. Federal Art Project



Just as we think of souls as dwelling in bodies, so homes dwell in houses. The home is affected by the kind of house lived in. Plaster and mortar are not without religious significance. It is plainly more difficult to create the values of the religious home in houses that are dark and crowded, where privacy is impossible, where sordid, ugly surroundings starve the mind of beauty and peace.

Good houses in wholesome neighborhoods are not the whole of salvation. But their influence upon human personality is too immediate, too basic, too important to be ignored by anyone who is in earnest about the kingdom of heaven on earth.

In America, sixty-three million Americans live in houses that are soundly built, have modern conveniences, provide play space for children, sun and fresh air for all.

But almost half of our fellow countrymen live in houses that do not measure up to standards of decent living.

A government survey in 1934 reports on an investigation of 2,600,000 dwellings in 64 cities. This "Real Property Inventory" states:

- 16.8 per cent of the houses were crowded or worse
- 13.5 per cent of the houses lacked private indoor toilets
- 20.2 per cent of the houses had neither bathtubs nor showers
- 8.1 per cent of the houses lacked modern lighting
- 5.0 per cent of the houses were without running water

These figures are averages. In some sections, conditions are considerably worse than average. From nine to ten million families live in houses and in neighborhoods which tend to destroy character and frustrate life.

**Bad housing makes for bad health.** The highest general death rates, sickness rates, and infant mortality rates are found in slum areas. Obviously, there are other contributing causes—poor food,



lack of medical care, other social deficiencies—but poor housing is basic. Surveys in Cleveland show that in the two highest rent areas, the general death rate was only 7.2 per 1,000, but that in the two lowest rent areas it was 15 per 1,000. The disproportion in the tuberculosis death rate was far greater.

**Bad housing makes for delinquency and crime.** Studies over a period of thirty years in Chicago show that, although the social make-up of certain slum areas has changed repeatedly—first Irish and German, then Scandinavian and Slavic, later Italian, Negro and Mexican—the same consistently high rates for delinquency and crime prevailed in those areas. Bring any social group into a slum area, and anti-social conduct develops at a higher than average rate.

**Bad housing is expensive for the tax payer.** Analysis of a slum district in Cleveland showed that, while this deteriorated area contained only 2.5 per cent of the total population, it produced 21 per cent of the murders, 26 per cent of the prostitution, 10 per cent of the illegitimate births, and 12 per cent of the deaths from tuberculosis. Furthermore, it absorbed an unduly large proportion of the city's budget for police protection, health work, relief, and fire protection. The tax rate income from this slum was \$10.12 per person, while the cost of operating the section was \$61.22 per person. In Boston, a study of 69,000 persons in a slum area showed a cost to the city of \$37.43 per person more than was being returned in taxes.











Why poor housing? People cannot afford to live in good homes.

In the prosperous year 1929, one-third of all American families had incomes *under* \$1,200 a year. The "Real Property Inventory" showed that one-third of the city families paid less than \$15 a month for rent, and of these one-third paid less than \$10. It is generally conceded that private enterprise can scarcely provide adequate housing at such low rentals—and still make a profit.



# SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN LOW AND HIGH INCOME AREAS

CLEVELAND - 1930

	LOW	HIGH
DENSITY OF POPULATION		
NUMBER OF BOY DELINQUENTS		
BIRTH RATE		
INFANT MORTALITY RATE		
TUBERCULOSIS DEATH RATE		

SOURCE—CULTURAL AREAS IN CITY OF CLEVELAND—H. W. GREEN





Among the possible solutions of the housing problems are:

**Modifying the distribution of our national income.** Probably all permanent improvement in housing conditions depends upon this accomplishment.

**Subsidizing families who cannot afford to pay even minimum rents.** This method meets an emergency but usually keeps families in the cheapest houses available.

**Government assistance in the building and operation of housing projects.** Under the present United States Housing Authority, 50 housing projects in 35 cities are now either completed or under construction, costing approximately \$130,000,000. At present 28 states have provided housing authorities to cooperate with the Federal government.

Good housing concerns everybody. Disease stops at no street. Delinquency and crime reach over into good neighborhoods for their victims.

Love and a keen sense of justice can help us go after an honest answer to the housing problem.

Are the people of your community—all the people—better housed because your church is part of the community?

## **S L U M S**

33% of the city's population  
40% of all births  
75% of the illegitimate children  
41% of all deaths  
52% of all deaths in infancy  
53% of all relief cases  
60% of all dependent children  
63% of the tuberculosis  
64% of the deaths from syphilis  
66% of the delinquents



P. W. A. WILLIAMSBURG HOUSING PROJECT NO. H-1301



*"Little park that I pass through,  
I carry off a piece of you,  
Every morning hurrying down  
To my work-day in the town."*

—Helen Hoyt



*Presbyterian Board of National Missions*

What do you do when you don't have to do anything? The cultural level of a nation can be rather accurately measured by the leisure-time interests of its people. Are they creative interests? Do people amuse themselves through first-hand participation in sports, games, singing, theatricals, folk dances, reading, studying wild life, gardening? Or are the prevalent amusements ready made, such as habitual and indiscriminating attendance at moving pictures?

It can be seen at once that the creative use of leisure time is, in many ways, more difficult in the city. At the same time, it is more necessary in cities where man is farther removed from the renewal of the earth beneath his feet. Certainly the city dweller finds it harder to know "the singing stars," to walk with the trees and listen to the wisdom of the fields. The very noise and



confusion which surround his work, and frequently interrupt his rest, make the renewal of his spirit more necessary.

The church, sensitive to the needs of the human spirit and long aware of the spirit's dependence upon a healthy body, has pioneered in the endeavor to turn leisure time into profitable time. Its activities are many. But perhaps greater than all of its overt services is the growing realization that *all the resources of the community belong to all of the community*. The church is not able to provide municipal parks sufficient for the use of all the people, nor able to develop playgrounds, install equipment, furnish supervisors for all the children, nor able to teach music and gardening and handicrafts to all who hunger for recreation. But the church can keep the need before the citizenry, insist upon its being met from the public treasury, and demand joyous and intelligent leisure for all the people, according to the need and ability of each man, woman, and child.

*W.P.A. Federal Art Project*





W.P.A. Federal Art Proj

"The evils of enforced labor—the labor of slaves—we all know. But the evils of enforced leisure, which leaves the masses of the people at loose ends and nothing worth while to do, are almost as bad."

—L. P. Jacks

Quotations from "Education through Recreation,"  
by L. P. Jacks. Harper & Brothers, publishers.



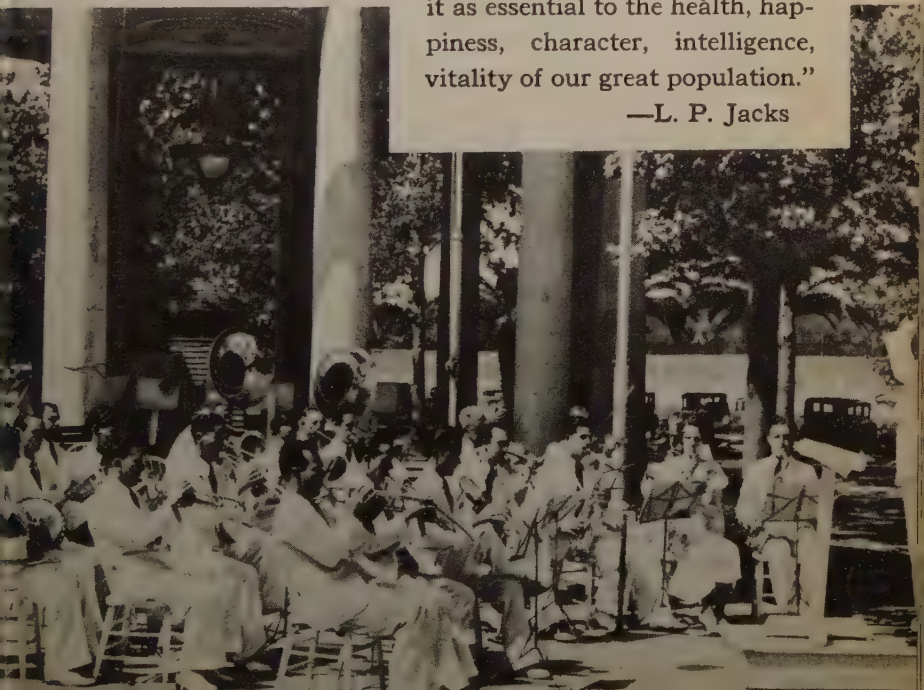


*A. Federal Art Project*

"Not for a moment will we allow that education for leisure is a trivial thing, a mere device for adding a little enjoyment to a dull and joyless life. We claim it as essential to the health, happiness, character, intelligence, vitality of our great population."

—L. P. Jacks

*Y.M.C.A.*







**"TRAIN UP A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO."**

*Presbyterian Board of National Missions*

*"And he went round about the villages teaching."*

For centuries the story of education was the story of the church. Monks and priests were the students and the teachers. Through the Dark Ages, into the Renaissance, across new frontiers, the church has frequently led the way. True, sometimes the church has lagged and dragged against scientific progress. True, sometimes the church today takes the short view or renders the partial service. But at its best the church is an eager-minded teacher.

Although the church taught the state and then largely retired from the field of public education, there are still 452 church-supported colleges and universities. Also 2,063,922 students of grade and high school age are in Protestant church-supported schools.

In every city of the land the church is at work augmenting the

home, the school, the neighborhood leisure-time facilities with further education.

There are 21,038,526 children in the Protestant Sunday schools of the land; 16,974,740 of them are in cities of 5,000 or more. (1926 Census of Religious Bodies.) Some of these Sunday schools are genuine aids in the education of their pupils.

The church's greatest service to education is the least apparent: its open forums, discussion groups, and study units through which eager-minded youth and adults weigh and measure against the religious ideal the values and the methods of the society of which they are a part.

*"Nor heeds the sceptic's puny hands,  
While near the school the church spire stands,  
Nor fears the blinded bigot's rule,  
While near the church spire stands the school."*

—Whittier  
Y.M.C.A.

**AND WHEN HE IS OLD HE WILL NOT DEPART FROM IT."**



*“ . . . Jesus went about . . . teaching . . . and preaching . . . and healing . . . the people.”*

Evidently Jesus felt that abundant health was the cornerstone of abundant life. His disciples continued in his tradition and it is not surprising that the early church became “the mother of hospitals.”

From the early days of Christianity the care of lepers was largely in the hands of the church. Today the American Mission to the Lepers works with 150 leper relief centers, spends over \$100,000 a year, and works with more than 100 Protestant missionaries of 22 communions.

The earliest hospitals served also as shelters for pilgrims, for the poor and the lame, as well as the sick.

During the epidemics of the Middle Ages it was largely the nuns, the monks, the sisters and brothers who ministered in the name of the church, who cared for the sick and provided such healing as was possible. On each successive frontier the church has pioneered in bringing health. Today there are new frontiers in every area where class or race discrimination defeats adequate medical care.

Sir Arthur Newsholme, in *Medicine and the State*, says: “Civilized communities have arrived at two decisions . . . the health of every individual is a social responsibility and . . . medical care in its widest sense for every individual is an essential condition of maximum efficiency and happiness in a civilized community.”

If the church continues in its high tradition, it will be the first to become aware of existing needs, to make public those needs and to work for the health of all.

From the 1932 report of the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care (composed of 48 members, including 27 physicians, with Dr. Ray Lyman Wilbur, Secretary of the Interior in the Hoover





*Underwood & Underwood*

Administration and a former president of the American Medical Association, as chairman):

1. From 25 to 30 per cent of all cases of relatively serious illness never come under the care of a physician.

2. In any given year about half the families with incomes of less than \$2,000 receive no medical care whatever, although because of poor housing, undernourishment, and occupational hazards, this is precisely the class that requires most medical care.

3. Poor families postpone calling the doctor. Workers report at work because they are paid by the day—when they should remain at home under medical care. Too often the poor enter the hospital on stretchers, and, if they survive, come out as chronic invalids, unable to support their families, who become public dependents.

According to Professor C. E. A. Winslow of Yale, we are spending today for public health work in the cities about one-third as much as is urgently needed. Only 9 per cent of our counties have a public health nursing service.

The cities of the United States stand very high in respect to investment of social capital—public and philanthropic funds—in medical schools, research institutions, hospitals and laboratories, and in respect to the average training and competence of doctors, dentists, nurses, and other health workers.

But our cities stand disastrously low in respect to minimum protection and care available to the majority of sick people.

Of the \$3,700,000,000 spent for medical care in the prosperous year of 1929, physicians received 29.8 per cent; hospitals, 23.4 per cent; medicine makers and distributors, 18.2 per cent; dentists, 12.2 per cent; nurses, 5.5 per cent; "cultists," 3.4 per cent; public health service, 3.3 per cent.

*Y.M.C.A.*





*W.P.A. Federal Art Project*

But public health services led the attack upon the major causes of infant and adult mortality, which played the largest rôle in reducing our national mortality 25 per cent between 1900 and 1932.

The four diseases most strikingly diminished—typhoid, diphtheria, and infant diarrhea over 90 per cent, and tuberculosis 60 per cent—are precisely those diseases which have been made the object of organized attack by the public health forces—to whom we give 3.3 per cent of our national health expenditure.



Each year \$350,000,000 is spent for patent medicines, most of them worthless or harmful.

Most competent authorities agree that if adequate health service were provided for all of the people, the nation would probably save more by so doing than it spends for the hopelessly inadequate, wasteful, and chaotic service now being rendered.

Dr. I. S. Falk, director of health studies for the Social Securities Board, estimates our annual capital loss through preventable sickness and deaths at about \$6,000,000,000.

Shall health service for everybody become a public function, paid for out of taxes, as education is paid for? As a nation we cannot afford illiteracy. Can we afford preventable illness? If not "state medicine," shall we continue to overlook state health insurance to provide a minimum guarantee of medical care and disability benefits for employed workers in the lower-income brackets? Shall we make more use of group hospitalization on the order of New York City's three-cents-a-day plan in which about 770,000 subscribers and more than 260 hospitals were participating on July 1, 1938?

"And He came forth, and saw a great multitude, and He had compassion on them, and healed their sick."

The church today stands in a complex social structure in which individual well-being depends upon group planning. With all the personal compassion which Jesus brought to the task of healing the multitudes among whom he mingled, the church continues to demand health for the common people—with determination, information, consecration.



*Courtesy Dept. of Health, City of New York, Photograph by W.P.A.*



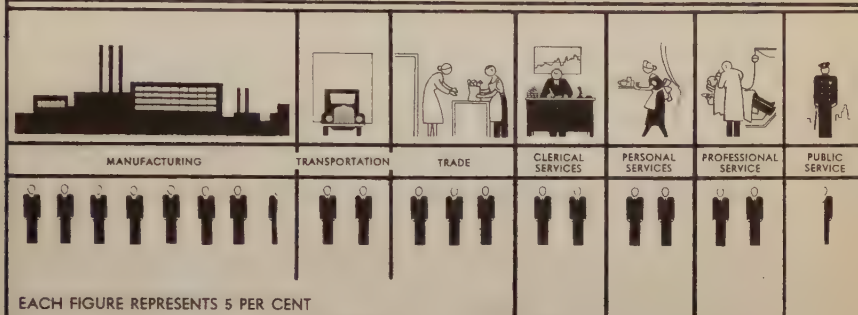
*"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd."*



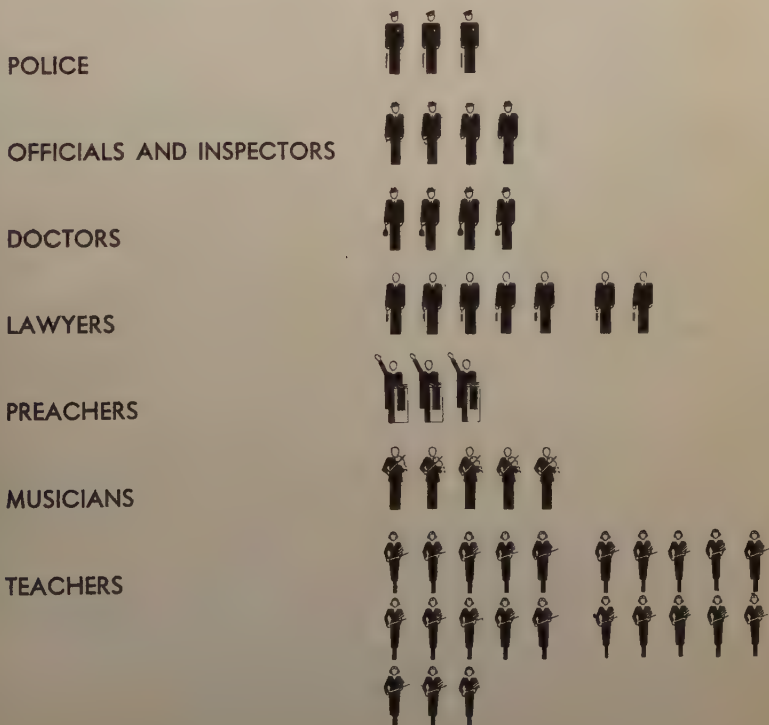
Y.M.C.A.



**In the average city of 50,000 people  
the wage-earners can be divided into  
the following approximate percentages:**



**FOR EVERY 1000 OF THE EMPLOYED  
POPULATION, SERVICE IS REQUIRED FROM:**



EACH FIGURE REPRESENTS ONE PER CENT

The average Southern city has more lawyers, ministers, doctors, and servants than the national requirements; fewer teachers and manufacturing workers.

But all of the working population of a city does not work. Why?

There are not enough jobs.

In the spring of 1929, when "good times" were at their height, there were nearly 3,000,000 unemployed in the United States. In April, 1937, the WPA, after careful technical studies, announced that this "permanently jobless" group would probably be about 4,000,000. In the late spring of 1938 the unemployed group numbered about 10,000,000.

Approximately  $84\frac{3}{4}$  per cent of the unemployed live in cities. Eliminating the unemployables (the crippled, blind, mentally deficient, aged and others), studies have shown that comparatively few of the unemployed are idlers or incompetents. Few of them accepted charity before the depression. A majority are manual workers, but a large and increasing proportion have been white-collar workers and professional men.

In the beginning of 1938 approximately 15,000,000 Americans were dependent on one of four forms of public relief:

1. 2,223,000 wage earners (7,500,000 persons) on the rolls of WPA and other works projects. Average wage less than \$55 a month.

2. 1,800,000 cases (5,400,000 persons) on "general relief provided by states and local communities." Average payment per case, less than \$25 per month. In 15 states the average monthly allowance has frequently been less than \$10 a month per family.

3. 2,100,000 receiving state pension for the aged (average, \$19.04 per month), for the blind (\$25.77), and as families of dependent children (\$31.08).

4. Beginnings of payment of unemployment insurance in 21 states. Payment is less than \$15 per week.

The predicament of the city: the unemployed of each city are a part of its corporate life, deserving the protection and privilege it affords. But the city lacks tax sources sufficient to meet such heavy need. State and Federal government tend to assume the chief responsibility. Thus, again, the problem of the city becomes the problem of all.

What has the church to do with the heavy problem of the unemployed?

Through the centuries the church has been accustomed to serve the needy in an individual capacity. Now it faces a nation-wide problem which affects millions, each one of whom is a child of God, to be dealt with as if he were blood-brother of the more fortunate.

*Y.M.C.A.*





To make a generalization carry the urgency of personal need is one of the difficult tasks for the imagination and determination of the church today. Most church members would probably agree on the following standards:

1. Relief must be adequate. Americans should be assured of at least the minimum essentials of health and decency.
2. Great care should be taken to protect the self-respect of the recipients, perhaps through a system of social security under which assistance is rendered as a right rather than as charity.
3. There is need for a unified, national program.
4. The whole program should be administered with as little cost to society as is consistent with the adequate standards.
5. Administration of the relief and security programs should, as far as possible, be taken out of politics and placed in the hands of trained experts.

Presentation of facts, public discussion, and pressure for adequate legislation are among the church members' responsibilities.

One way the unemployed, the low-income group and the middle-bracket group in cities are working together to make their incomes "stretch further" is through consumers' and housing cooperatives.

The retail cooperative store has the following principles: membership is open to everybody; each member, no matter how many shares he owns, has one vote; the return on capital is limited, usually to the legal rate of interest; earnings are distributed to members in proportion to their patronage.

City cooperatives include various kinds of stores, gas stations, laundries, credit unions, restaurants, recreation facilities, supply of electricity, housing.

Approximately one-tenth of the 800,000 people enrolled in the Consumers Cooperative Movement of America, are town and city people.



*an Board of National Missions*

*Y.M.C.A.*



Some 50,000,000 people are dependent upon the nation's industry. "A civilization saves its soul by the way it earns its daily bread." The city church cannot ignore the struggle of millions of workers to organize in order to bargain collectively for better laboring conditions, shorter hours, a fairer wage-share in the profits of industry. Justice never comes to pass in the abstract. The church offers an open forum for the discussion of facts and a high criterion of brotherhood for the measuring of those facts.



P.W.A.

*"For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen."*

The 1930 census furnishes the latest figures for child labor. Two million children, between 10 and 17, were gainfully employed—one out of every nine children in America—466,251 in manufacturing and mechanical industries, 209,304 in domestic and personal service, 187,963 in trade.





As long as thousands of children work in mills and factories, at street trades and sweated home labor, the city church must offer herself as the unpaid attorney for the child before the bar of American public opinion.

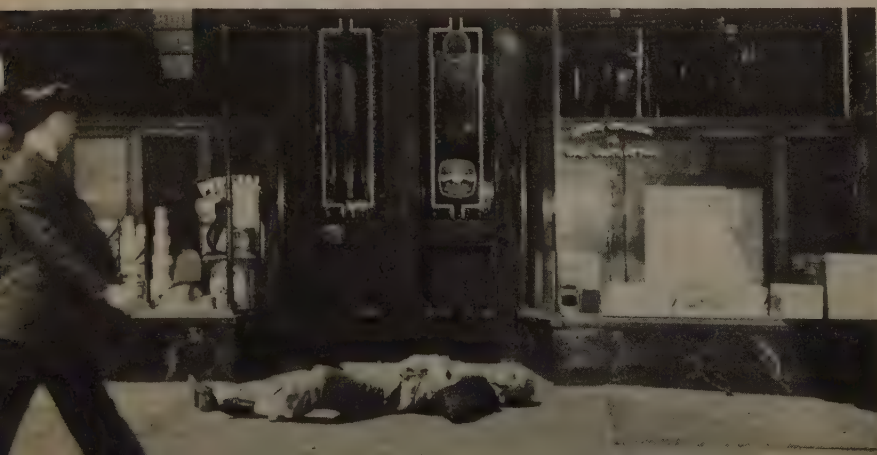


The city church cannot separate itself from the context of problems which complicate city life, among them the growing problem of liquor control. It must reckon with such facts as these:

In 1936, the consumption of distilled liquor was approximately  $2\frac{1}{2}$  quarts for every individual in the United States, beer 13 gallons per person. . . . In New York state the increase in drunken driving for 1936 was 71 per cent over 1933. . . . Two billion dollars are invested in the manufacture of alcoholic beverages. . . . There are more retail liquor establishments than general dry goods stores, candy stores, garages, and nearly as many as grocery stores and filling stations. . . . About 1,000,000 women are employed as hostesses, or "tease girls," in saloons, night clubs, cocktail rooms, taxi-dance halls, gambling places—most of them in cities. The liquor industry spends about \$100,000,000 a year on advertising.

The church led the way in bringing to pass the Eighteenth Amendment. This experiment in prohibition failed. But the answer to one failure is not continued failure. The answer is more realism, more facts, and a sterner dealing with those facts. City churches are once more measuring their strength against the hold of the liquor traffic on the American public.

*Presbyterian Board of National Missions*





*Underwood & Underwood*

*"Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times."*

The problems of the city church are as broad as the needs of city men, women, children. To indicate something of their variety is to suggest the keen awareness which the church must cultivate toward the life about it.

There is the problem of congestion, sometimes increased by the very effort at relief. For example, the building of Wacker Drive, Chicago, at a cost of \$22,000,000 a mile, caused increased taxes, rise in rents, increased land values and consequently more use and more congestion.

There is the problem of regional planning, entailing education of the public and the use of expert direction. Perhaps eventually the communal ownership of land in line with the public domain of our grandfather's day.

The problem of gambling, which now absorbs an average of \$40 from each person each year, the control of gambling joints, race tracks, slot machines, stock market operations.

The problem of race discrimination in the use of parks, bathing beaches, housing zones, hospitals.



The problems of the city are the human problems of trying to achieve the abundant life—the religious life—in a situation where the stress of economic rivalry and the strain of social injustice operate against brotherhood.

To Thomas Jefferson we owe the official separation of church and state. But the church member is also a citizen and must function in both capacities. As a church member he sets up ideals for individual conduct, for social achievement. Functioning as a citizen he helps to bring some of his ideals to pass by means of his vote. Thus through its members the church frequently pioneers for better legislation.

The following questions are being studied, publicized and answered by various city churches, although such questions are settled only by legislation:

What is the volume of tax delinquencies in your community? Who bears the burden? What solution do you suggest?

What portion of taxes in your community goes to schools? Unemployment relief? Public health?

Has your community any slum clearance or low-rent housing projects? Does it need them?

*W.P.A. Federal Art Project*



Is there a public market? Is it owned by the city and operated at cost? Are the market commissioners and food inspectors selected on the basis of merit?

Is "filled milk" sold as a substitute and used by children? Are your city streets adequately lighted? Why should they be? Has your city an up-to-date sewage system?

How do the rates of the public utility services of your community compare with cities of similar size?

How are probation officers appointed in your city? What qualifications are required? Has your city a domestic relations court? Where are women and children detained pending trial?

How many parks and playgrounds are located near congested areas in your city?

What kind of commercial amusements are there in your neighborhood? In your city? Does your church combat unwholesome commercial amusements?

*Federal Art Project*



Do you have a public health nursing service? Clinics for persons of small means? Open to all races?

What is being done about venereal disease control in your city? About tuberculosis control? What occupational or industrial diseases are prevalent? What means are taken to prevent further cases?

What is the per pupil cost of education in your city? Does it differ for white children and black?

How far do the children of your city have to go to school?

What kind of institutional care is available for those in need in your community? Are such institutions adequately supported?

What child welfare services are provided in your city?

What regulations govern the entrance of children into street trades such as shoe-shining, newspaper-selling, delivering? Does your church ever look into the enforcement of these regulations?

What work is there for young people when they leave school?

The city church has the difficult task of exploring conditions which affect large numbers of people and then of working for adequate legislation which becomes possible only when masses of people care. Only the love of God can activate brotherhood in such large terms.

The task of the city demands nothing less than a united church. At present there are some 1800 combined local churches in existence. There is also a growing tendency toward the union of denominations, such as the recent union of the Northern Methodists and Southern Methodists and the union of the Congregational and Christian denominations.

Besides organic union, there is the effective union of churches of many denominations in support of concrete tasks. The city church may be called upon to lose itself—its buildings, equipment, perhaps its staff—in order to save itself in the service of the city.



"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

Jesus spoke to the city church in the present hour. *Human personality must be respected.* That was the thing which Jesus said over and over, in precept and parable, to individuals and to multitudes—man in the image of God and no less! Mercy, justice, truth, love—these are the tests of human relationship.

The city church will have to use the new tools of our modern day, the heavy tools which no other generation has been strong enough to lift, the finely tempered tools which we are only now becoming skilled enough to use.

None knows better than the city church that life is more than food and raiment and that the church can transcend the life it criticizes only by service. The church rises to spiritual heights not by ignoring the necessities of city life but by filling these necessities and pressing on.

**"But He said unto them, I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent."**



## THE CITY AND ITS WAYS

UP and down the country this year of 1938-39 thousands of church folk are studying the city and its ways. It is highly probable that as Lewis Mumford wrote his *The Culture of Cities* he was quite unaware of this large sector vitally interested in such surveys. Nevertheless he has provided these missionary study groups with an indispensable handbook.

Lewis Mumford is a social scientist but he is also an artist. He dissects, analyzes and explores "the basic principles upon which our human environment—buildings, neighborhoods, cities, regions—may be renovated." He traces the development of urban life beginning with the medieval city; the baroque city; the industrial town; the metropolis; the regional complex, and the biotechnic civilization. His concluding chapter deals with the social basis of the new urban order. His language is frequently technical, and one needs the brief glossary in the supplement. But no catalogue of chapter headings can convey the sense of accuracy of his diagnosis; the brilliancy of his characterizations; the passionate concern for human values that he displays.

Neither is Mr. Mumford the "pure" scientist, the aloof artist. His analysis is set forth as a basis for action. "We must erect a cult of life: life in action, as the farmer or mechanic knows it; life in expression as the artist knows it; life as the lover feels it and the parent practises it; life as it is known to the men of good will who meditate in the cloister, experiment in the laboratory or plan intelligently in the factory or the government office."

*The Culture of Cities* (Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1938, \$5.00) is a book to read, to study, to own. The missionary society or the women's guild of every church should own a copy to use throughout the year. And this applies to rural communities as well as urban centers, for *The Culture of Cities* is a key to understanding our contemporary civilization.

KATHARINE TERRILL



